REMARKS

Claims 1-4 and 6 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-4 and

6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Walker et al., U.S. Patent

No. 4,936,862. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as anticipated by

Eufinger et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,798,924.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of the claims. Independent

claim 1 recites, in part:

> generating a virtual three-dimensional model from image
> data of at least the patient's implant area and the environment
> thereof, comparing the virtual three-dimensional model to real
> medical reference data, selecting from the real medical reference
> data a set of said reference data best suited for the patient and
> forming a reference model object therefrom, generating a virtual
> implant model from said reference model object, and manufacturing
> the implant by computer numeric control based on data from the
> virtual implant model.

These limitations are not taught or suggested by the cited art. For instance,

the Walker et al. reference fails to anticipate generating a virtual 3-D image of at

least the patient's implant area and the surrounding environment. Rather, the

Walker et al. reference merely uses tomography or radiographs to determine the

size and shape of the corresponding bone when it is determined that an implant for

a femur or other bone is required. In Walker et al., the first step of the method

does not provide a true-to-nature model corresponding to the patient. The model

obtained by Walker only includes features of an average bone as being owned by

other comparable human beings. Then, this model, by comparing operations,

serves as a pattern design for the prosthesis. The specific features of the bone

structure of the patient are not detected as in the present invention. Thus, Walker

et al. does not teach a method according to the present invention.

The Eufinger et al. reference fails to render the claimed invention obvious.

This reference fails to teach selecting from the real medical reference data set of

said reference data best suited for the patient and forming a reference model object

therefrom.

Eufinger et al. transforms data of a desired model (reference model) and a

model of actual patient in spline functions based on supporting points. This

resembles a convention interpolation where, the models represented by a few

points and corresponding approximation functions. The models obtained are

visualized there in superposition.

By displacement of the supporting points at the limiting faces of the models,

the adaptation of the prothesis is carried out by taking back partial areas of the

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intersections of "existing bone models" of a patient [which according to claim 1 is obtained from a record of an 'existing bone structure" of a patient by computer tomography] towards the volume of the "reference model." The displacement of the supporting points is carried out merely visually and, hence, is reproducible only in a few cases. According to Eufinger, the final form of the prosthesis is obtained by subtraction of the adapted real model and the initial desired model.

Accordinlgy, as the cited art fails to teach or suggest the claimed invention, it is respectfully requested that all rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and §103(a) be withdrawn.

In light of the foregoing, the application is now believed to be in proper

form for allowance of all claims and notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No.

10-1250.

Respectfully submitted,
JORDAN AND HAMBURG LLP

By _C. Bruce Hamburg_
　　C. Bruce Hamburg
　　Reg. No. 22,389
　　Attorney for Applicants
and,

By _Jacqueline M. Steady_
　　Jacqueline M. Steady
　　Reg. No. 44,354
　　Attorney for Applicants

Jordan and Hamburg LLP
122 East 42nd Street
New York, New York 10168
(212) 986-2340